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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/024,544	12/21/2001	Masashi Nakashita	2038-282	3584

7590 04/19/2004

LOWE HAUPTMAN GILMAN & BERNER, LLP
Suite 310
1700 Diagonal Road
Alexandria, VA 22314

EXAMINER

REICHLE, KARIN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3761	7

DATE MAILED: 04/19/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/024,544	NAKASHITA, MASASHI
Examiner	Art Unit	
	Karin M. Reichl	3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appars on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 January 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) 1-20 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-5, drawn to a body fluid absorbent wearing article, classified in class 604, subclass 380.
 - II. Claims 6-15, drawn to a body fluid absorbent wearing article, classified in class 604, subclass 378.
 - III. Claims 16-20, drawn to a liquid absorbent panel, classified in class 428, subclass 170.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions (I or II) and III are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the combination of Group I does not require a liquid absorbent panel with disconnected areas as set forth in the Group III claims and the combination of Group II does not require the a flat second opposite side of the base portion and the combination of protuberances, wall portions, flat side of the base portion and specific densities thereof as set forth in the Group III claims. The subcombination has separate utility such as scouring pad or cosmetic applicator.

Inventions II and I are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the Group II claims do not require the features of compressive restorative elasticity, a first subpanel having a flat portion, and a flat second subpanel and these features in combination with specific density or fiber weight percentages or superabsorbent weight percentages as set forth in the Group I claims. The subcombination has separate utility such as a shock absorbing pad to be placed inside a shoe (Note the description on page 1, lines 4-7 of the instant specification).

3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification which would lead to diverging fields of search, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

4. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

5. It is further noted that line 1 of claims 2-5 filed 1-23-04 did not comply with 37 CFR 1.121 effective 7-30-04 because "claim" should be --Claim-- or "Claim" should be shown as being changed to --claim--. Furthermore, the preambles of claims 17-20 are not consistent with that of claim 16. Finally, claims 11 and 20 claim disconnected areas. "Disconnected" is defined as "To sever or interrupt the connection of or between". Where are such areas described in the

original specification? Denoted in the Figures? Are they part of one of the surfaces of the base portion?

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karin M. Reichle whose telephone number is (703) 308-2617. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Calvert can be reached on (703) 308-1025. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

K.M. Reichle
Karin M. Reichle
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3761

KMR
March 13, 2004